

REMARKS

Initially, Applicant respectfully acknowledges that the Examiner has objected to claim 2 and has indicated that claim 2 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claims and any intervening claims.

Claims 1-7 remain pending in the application. Claims 1, 2 and 6 have been amended, and claim 7 has been added.

Reconsideration of the rejections and allowance of the pending application in view of the foregoing amendments and following remarks are respectfully requested.

In the Office Action of February 3, 2005, claims 1, 3, 5 and 6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being clearly anticipated by Ito et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,848,314 (hereinafter Ito), and claim 4 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ito in view of Kurei et al., U.S. Patent No. 4,860,043 (hereinafter Kurei). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Independent claim 1 has been amended to more clearly define a structural feature of the invention and to more clearly distinguish over the applied prior art reference by further clarifying that the horizontal distance from the lens optical axis to a head portion of the mount locking button. No new matter is introduced by the present amendment. In this regard, the Examiner's attention is directed to Fig. 1 and page 10, lines 15-22 of the present application.

It is a disclosed object of the present invention to provide a mount lock apparatus for a camera in which no unintentional operation of an unlocking button occurs.

To achieve the above-noted object, a mount lock apparatus for a camera of the present invention, as recited in amended claim 1, includes a projecting exterior portion which is provided substantially at a central portion of a front surface of a camera body, a circular annular mount plate, which is fitted to the projecting exterior portion, and to which a photographing lens unit is detachably attached, the circular annular mount plate having a connecting surface which contacts with the photographing lens unit, a mount lock pin which is biased to protrude from the connecting surface of the circular annular mount plate to engage with the photographing lens unit at a predetermined position, and a mount unlocking button which is operated to move the mount lock pin in a direction to retract from the connecting surface. Further, the mount unlocking button is provided on a portion of an outer peripheral surface of the projecting exterior portion that is located closer to a lens optical axis thereof than a farthestmost portion of the projecting exterior portion from the lens optical axis in a horizontal direction of the camera body, and a horizontal distance from the lens optical axis to a head portion of the mount unlocking button is smaller than a horizontal distance from the lens optical axis to an outermost edge of the projecting exterior portion.

Applicant respectfully submits that the references relied upon in the rejections under 35U.S.C. 102(b) and 103(a), considered singly or in any proper combination, do not disclose such a combination of features. Although the primary reference Ito includes a mount unlocking button 40 attached to the operation base portion 13, the position of the mount unlocking button 40 does not satisfy such a dimensional relation that a horizontal distance from the lens optical axis to a head portion of the mount unlocking button is smaller than a horizontal distance from the lens optical axis to an outermost edge of the projecting exterior portion. Rather, the mount unlocking button 40 would be construed to be “closer to a lens optical axis than a outermost edge portion of the projecting exterior portion from the lens optical axis in a horizontal direction of the camera body”.

On the contrary, as explained above, in the present invention, the horizontal distance D_b from the lens optical axis to a head portion of the mount locking button is smaller than the other horizontal distance D_{max} from the lens optical axis to an outermost edge of the projecting exterior portion. These features of the present invention are not disclosed or suggested in Ito.

Thus, Ito does not anticipate the present invention or render the presently claimed invention unpatentable.

The secondary Kurei reference does not teach the above-noted features of the present invention, although Kurei includes a mount lock releasing member. The Kurei

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reference is directed to an apparatus kinematically linking a driving shaft and a mount lock releasing member on a camera body. Therefore, Kurei does not overcome the deficiencies of Ito.

Thus, even assuming, arguendo, that the teachings of Ito and Kurei could be properly combined, the asserted combination of Ito and Kurei would not result in the invention as recited in claim 4.

Claim 2 has been rewritten to incorporate all of the limitations of original base claim 1 as new claim 7 in accordance with the Examiner's indication of the allowability of claim 2.

Applicants' incorporation of the features of original claim 1 into claim 2 as new claim 7 is made without in any way acquiescing in the propriety of any of the rejection made by the Examiner. Rather these amendments are made only to expedite allowance of the present application. In response to the allowable subject matter indicated in the Official Action, and to the statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter therein, Applicant wishes to clarify the record with respect to the basis for the patentability of claims in the present application. In this regard, while Applicant does not disagree with the Examiner's indication that certain identified features are not disclosed by the references, Applicant submits that each of the claims in the present application

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recite a particular combination of features, and that the basis for patentability of each of these claims is based on the totality of the particular features recited therein.

Independent claims 1, 6 and 7 are now in condition for allowance in view of the amendments and the above-noted remarks. Dependent claims 2-5 are also submitted to be in condition for allowance in view of their dependence from the allowable base claim and also at least based upon their recitations of additional features of the present invention. It is respectfully requested, therefore, that the rejections under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) and 35 U.S.C. 103(a) be withdrawn and that an early indication of the allowance thereof be given.

Based on the above, it is respectfully submitted that this application is now in condition for allowance, and a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

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Should the Examiner have any questions or comments regarding this response, or the present application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,
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